

Ellis Island Oral Interview

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Education Department
Ellis Island Immigration Museum
Statue of Liberty National Monument



Interviewee: Knud Larsen

Date of Birth: August 27, 1899

Date of Interview: March 28 and 29, 1993

Interviewer: Paul E. Sigrist, Jr.

Immigrated from Denmark at Age 24 in 1923

Ellis Island Collection: EI-267

Larsen (The Language Barrier):

Let me tell you what I didn't like the most was, I couldn't understand what they were saying. It's awful hard to understand what it means that you can't understand a word, what anybody says to you. And, I'll tell you, if anybody would have said, "I'll give you the money, and you can take the boat back to Denmark," I would have done it any day in the week. And it took me I would say just about a year before I conquered that, because it's hard to understand that you can't understand what people are talking about. Get up in the morning, you can't understand them, you go to work. They laugh at you when you say something because it's, I suppose it sounds crazy to them, and so you just go along.

Some day when I come back, no matter what happens, I'm going to stay in that particular place that I was born. I wouldn't move. I found that out in life. I would never move from my birth place because when you do that you're making an awful mistake. You make it awful hard for yourself. Unless that you have energy enough to go through and learn the language that you were born in, because that is missing all your life. You hate to think of every time I opened my mouth, they know I'm a foreigner, and I don't like that.